

Utah's Overall Uninsured Rate Shows Little Change Despite Tough Economic Times

HAVING HEALTH INSURANCE is important. Without health insurance, medical costs can quickly break a family's budget. Utah workers who are covered go to work healthy and ready to work. Students with coverage miss fewer days of school. Having health insurance means getting care sooner, not waiting until a condition worsens and treatment costs more. Insurance coverage keeps Utahns healthier, gives them peace of mind, and saves money.

Though Utah suffered from a poor economy, new data from the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) shows little change in the percentage of uninsured Utahns. In 2001, about 199,000 Utahns, or 8.7 percent of the population, were uninsured. In 2003, about 215,000 Utahns, or 9.1 percent of the population, were uninsured.

While the overall number changed little, people said they were uninsured for different reasons. In 2003, Utahns were more likely to say they didn't have health insurance due to factors related to the poor economy and unemployment. Among people who were uninsured:

- Almost half said they were uninsured because they lost their job or changed employers (47.5 percent in 2003 compared with 29.5 percent in 2001)
- More than half said they were uninsured because they could not afford insurance (66.3 percent in 2003 compared with 52.1 percent in 2001)
- More Utahns couldn't get insurance due to working part-time or temporary jobs (17.5 percent in 2003 compared with 14.6 percent in 2001)


At the same time, fewer Utahns said they were uninsured for a year or more, due to an employer not offering insurance, or because they thought it was safe to be uninsured.

About 71 percent of insured Utahns had health insurance through work, and 10 percent of insured Utahns bought private health insurance. About 8 percent of insured Utahns said a Utah Department of Health program covered them. As of April, the UDOH covered about 209,000 Utahns through CHIP, PCN, Medicaid, and Covered at Work.

The UDOH has many programs that help the uninsured get health services, including RxConnect Utah, the Utah Cancer Control Program, the Primary Care Grants Program, Baby Your Baby, clinics for children with special health care needs, and more. Community health clinics, charity care, and other safety net programs also provide essential health care services to the uninsured.



Sisters Jozette and Rosario have benefitted from CHIP

These data are from the 2003 Health Status Survey. The UDOH's Office of Public Health Assessment will now be making new data from the Health Status Survey available every year. While other surveys collect similar information, the UDOH's Health Status Survey provides the most accurate measure for Utah. Visit www.ibis.health.utah.gov to view data and reports from the UDOH Health Status Survey. 

Insurance and Health Services

- Medicaid pays medical and some dental expenses for people who qualify, 1-800-662-9651 or www.health.utah.gov/medicaid.
- PCN, primary care benefits for Utah adults, 1-888-222-2542 or www.health.utah.gov/pcn
- CHIP covers Utah kids who qualify, 1-877-KIDS-NOW or www.health.utah.gov/chip.
- Covered at Work is a program to help you pay for your health insurance at work—call the UDOH's Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542 or visit www.health.utah.gov/caw.
- RxConnect Utah connects people with programs to help them get affordable prescriptions, 1-866-221-0265 or www.health.utah.gov/rxconnectutah.
- Utah Cancer Control Program offers breast and cervical cancer screening to women who qualify, 1-800-717-1811 or www.utahcancer.org.
- Tobacco Prevention and Control Program leads the fight against tobacco-related death, disease, and economic burdens in Utah by mobilizing the state to support tobacco-free lifestyles and environments, 1-888-567-TRUTH, utahquitnet.com, or www.tobaccofreeutah.org/.
- Primary Care Grants Program helps fund programs that increase access to primary care for underserved and vulnerable Utahns, 801-538-6818 or health.utah.gov/primary_care/primarycare.html.
- Children with Special Health Care Needs clinics are provided in conjunction with the child's Medical Home provider for children who have or who are at risk for having a developmental disability or chronic illness, 801-584-8284, or 1-800-829-8200 or health.utah.gov/cshcn/.
- Baby Your Baby encourages pregnant women to visit their health care provider before their 13th week of pregnancy and make at least 13 visits to their provider throughout pregnancy, 1-800-826-9662 or www.babyyourbaby.org.
- BabyWatch/Early Intervention programs offer services to children 0-3 years who have a developmental delay or a condition with a high probability of developmental delay, 1-800-961-4226 or 801-584-8226 or www.utahbabywatch.org/.
- Oral Health Program works to advance the health and well-being of Utahns by promoting prevention of oral disease and by helping to assure access to timely and affordable oral health care services, 801-538-9177 or health.utah.gov/oralhealth.
- STD/HIV/Hepatitis C, and tuberculosis testing, monitoring, and coordination, health.utah.gov/els/hiv aids/.
- WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that provides nutrition education, lactation counseling and food vouchers for women, infants and children up to 5 yrs of age, 1-877-WIC-KIDS or visit health.utah.gov/wic/.